

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A method of processing a nickel-containing layer comprising:

providing a nickel-containing layer overlying a substrate;
introducing a process gas, said process gas comprising a carbonyl gas and a hydrogen halide gas;
forming plasma from said process gas; and
etching said nickel-containing layer by exposing said nickel-containing layer to said plasma, wherein
said process gas reacts with said nickel-containing layer and etches completely through a portion of said nickel-containing layer to said substrate.

Claim 2 (Canceled)

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The method according to ~~claim 2~~ claim 1, wherein said hydrogen halide comprises at least one of hydrogen bromide (HBr), hydrogen chloride (HCl) and hydrogen iodide (HI).

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The method according to ~~claim 2~~ claim 1, wherein said carbonyl gas comprises at least one of carbon monoxide (CO) and carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The method according to ~~claim 2~~ claim 1, wherein said process gas comprises HBr and CO.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The method according to ~~elaim-2~~ claim 1, wherein said process gas comprises HBr and CO₂.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The method according to ~~elaim-2~~ claim 1, wherein said process gas comprises HCl and CO.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The method according to ~~elaim-2~~ claim 1, wherein said process gas comprises HCl and CO₂.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The method according to ~~elaim-2~~ claim 1, wherein said process gas comprises HI and CO.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The method according to ~~elaim-2~~ claim 1, wherein said process gas comprises HI and CO₂.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The method according to ~~elaim-2~~ claim 1, wherein said nickel-containing layer contains nickel and titanium.

Claim 12 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said nickel-containing layer contains nickel and iron.

Claim 13 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said process gas also comprises an inert gas.

Claim 14 (Original): The method according to claim 13, wherein said inert gas comprises at least one of argon, helium, xenon and nitrogen.

Claim 15 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said substrate is maintained at a temperature of between 40°C and 100°C.

Claim 16 (Original): The method according to claim 5, wherein a flowrate of HBr is less than 500 sccm and a flowrate of CO is less than 500 sccm.

Claim 17 (Original): The method according to claim 6, wherein a flowrate of HBr is less than 500 sccm and a flowrate of CO₂ is less than 500 sccm.

Claim 18 (Original): The method according to claim 7, wherein a flowrate of HCl is less than 500 sccm and a flowrate of CO is less than 500 sccm.

Claim 19 (Original): The method according to claim 8, wherein a flowrate of HCl is less than 500 sccm and a flowrate of CO₂ is less than 500 sccm.

Claim 20 (Original): The method according to claim 9, wherein a flowrate of HI is less than 500 sccm and a flowrate of CO is less than 500 sccm.

Claim 21 (Original): The method according to claim 10, wherein a flowrate of HI is less than 500 sccm and a flowrate of CO₂ is less than 500 sccm.

Claims 22-39 (Canceled)